

TESTIMONY OF  
BRIAN J. FLAHERTY

Executive & Legislative Nominations Committee  
March 10, 2009

Good morning Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, and members of the Committee, I am Brian Flaherty from Watertown, and I am pleased to appear before you this morning as a nominee for re-appointment to the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

I would first like to thank Governor Rell for nominating me to serve on the Board, and I am honored to be sitting in front of a Committee on which I sat and in this building where I served 15 years, representing the 68<sup>th</sup> District in the House of Representatives.

It has often been said that Connecticut's greatest natural resource is embodied in the people who are trained in our education system – *our students* – from kindergarten through college.

As many of you may know, my own introduction to Connecticut's higher education system came at an early age. My father taught for more than 25 years as a professor in our technical college system, and through him I learned a great deal about a system that has become one of our most effective, agile, and vital public college systems. Upon graduating high school, I earned my Bachelor of Arts degree from Fairfield University, one of the many fine independent colleges and universities that also are an integral part of higher education in Connecticut.

During my service in the General Assembly, from 1989 to 2003, I worked closely with the men and women in the Department of Higher Education and from throughout the system of higher education. Looking back on my term as Ranking Member of the Education Committee and eight years as Ranking Member of the Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee, I was able to learn much about the inner workings of all the state systems of higher education. I believe I have brought that knowledge base to the Board of Governors during their deliberations over the past four years in areas such as budgeting, student transfer and textbook costs. As I have said many times, and for many years, we all are at our best when we focus on the students. Whether it is a student in one of our private occupational schools, or a Nutmeg Scholar at UConn, the students, the taxpayer and you as policymakers should receive the best stewardship we can offer.

Mister Chairman, Madame Chair, there is certainly no shortage of challenges facing our state's colleges and universities, and no shortage of talent inside the four corners of this state to meet today's challenges. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.